

THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20505

Dear Admiral:

I am initially approaching COINS with two steps in mind. Most immediately, I want to satisfy myself that I have developed a sound basis for making the judgments that lie ahead. To do this, I am now setting up a small group that will be charged with making an assessment for me of the concepts that should underlie a national intelligence data base. Pending the results of this survey -- with which I expect to understand the essence of the problem -- I am open-minded as to the future architecture and overall concept for COINS.

There are areas, however, where we can make immediate progress. We will improve files now in COINS and set standards for those that are placed in the system in the relatively near future. Here, I have undertaken a number of specific actions, along the following lines:

-- File content and coverage. I am now taking steps to involve the substantive USIB committees in working with the USIB Intelligence Information Handling Committee (IHC) to validate community need for particular kinds of data and to provide guidance on the content, coverage and format of files. For example, if COINS were to include a new file on the subject of nuclear energy, JAEIC should be involved in providing insights on behalf of potential users. The Intelligence Community (IC) Staff also has a responsibility in the matter of file content.

-- File completeness. A survey is now underway by the IC Staff to illustrate and characterize the security and dissemination restrictions that must be dealt with to make data in COINS files more complete and accessible throughout the community. Based on the results of this survey, which I expect to have in hand within two weeks, we will begin an orderly re-examination of this problem.

-- User assistance. I am asking that the interagency Data Base Working Group make, as a regular part of its survey of files for COINS, an examination of the adequacy of cross-reference notations and user instructions contained

in the files. Where worthwhile improvements can be made, we will modify the programs that produce data for users.

-- File reliability. Upon completion of the assessment that I mentioned at the outset, I expect to share the results of that survey with USIB members. At that time I will ask them to accept specific responsibilities for producing and maintaining certain COINS files and for assuring their accuracy and completeness.

I have charged the USIB Intelligence Information Handling Committee (IHC) to take energetic action to carry out its responsibilities under DCID 1/4 (Intelligence Information Handling Committee) and 1/15 (Data Element and Code Standardization for Intelligence and Intelligence Information). Parts of these directives bear on improving methods and facilities for information handling and procedures and formats for the exchange of information between agencies.

In another direction, you will find that the Objectives for the Intelligence Community, which I forwarded to the President on September 6th, and which as you know he has approved, include actions that could result in the development of a number of new data files and arrays. If any of these appear appropriate for COINS, we will, I think, be able to recognize this at the outset of our planning and take advantage of the opportunity.

W. E. Colby

Atts (2):
DCID 1/4
DCID 1/15

on COINS
Attached is a briefing paper/for Mr. Colby's possible use
at PFIAB, Friday 5 October 73.

This is in letter format, and depending on its reception
at the PFIAB meeting, it may serve as a basis for replying to
Admiral Anderson's letter to Mr. Colby of 25 September, on the
same subject.

NCF

Attached was ret'd by
I gather it was not used at PFIAB.